

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4950
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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TAGS: APER, SA
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR THIRD FSL CONSULAR POSITION

REF: (A) DHAHRAN,0938, (B) DHAHRAN 0632, (C) DHAHRAN 0411

1. IN REF A WE DISCUSSED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE ACCELERATING WORKLOAD PROBLEM PRESENTLY CONFRONTING THE POST'S CONSULAR SECTION AND WE APPRISED DEPARTMENT OF NEED TO ESTABLISH A THIRD FSL POSITION IN SECTION. PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS NOT TO EXPLAIN FURTHER THE GROWTH OF CONSULAR WORK AT THIS POST BUT TO OUTLINE WORK REQUIREMENTS OF THE FSL POSITION WHICH WE NOW REQUEST BE ESTABLISHED AT THE FSL-6 LEVEL.

2. REFS B AND C DESCRIBED GROWTH IN CONSULAR WORKLOAD AT POST AS WELL AS ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN WORKLOAD OVER NEXT TWO FYS. IN THOSE REFERENCED MESSAGES WE ANTICIPATED AN INCREASE IN CONSULAR QUANTITY
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COMPLEMENT BY ONE FSL POSITION IN FY 77. IN POINT OF FACT, THE HEAVIER THAN ANTICIPATED DEMAND FOR CONSULAR SERVICES REQUIRED POST IN JUNE TO MAKE TEMPORARY SHIFT RESULTING IN TOTAL OF THREE FSL EMPLOYEES IN CONSULAR SECTION. THE THIRD EMPLOYEE IS SECRETARY ON LOAN FROM ADMIN SECTION. IN ADDITION, EARLIER THIS MONTH, AS CONSULAR WORKLOAD PUSHED UPWARD TO ITS SEASONAL CREST, POST WAS FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO CONTRACT-HIRE FORMER CONSULAR FSL OF AMEMBASSY TEHRAN (WHO IS NOW LIVING IN CONSULAR DISTRICT WITH AMERICAN HUSBAND). HAVING FOUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES IN CONSULAR SECTION IS SHORT-TERM SITUATION, BUT IT DOES POINT UP FACT THAT ONLY WITH THOSE EXTRA INPUTS OF MANPOWER HAS POST KEPT ON TOP OF THE
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DAY-TO-DAY CRUSH FOR CONSULAR SERVICE. A STAFF OF FOUR FSL'S IN

CONSULAR SECTION IS NOT A YEAR-AROUND REQUIREMENT, BUT A STAFF OF THREE IS IF FILES ARE TO BE PROPERLY MAINTAINED AND ALL REQUIREMENTS OF CONSULAR FAM'S ARE TO BE OBSERVED. WE NOTE, IN THIS REGARD, THAT AFTER A RECENT AUDIT OF CONSULAR SECTION VISA OFFICE MEMBER LOUIS GOELZ STRONGLY RECOMMENDED ESTABLISHMENT OF THIRD FSL CONSULAR POSITION.

3. TO UNDERSTAND BETTER FSL STAFFING IN CONSULAR SECTION, DEPT. SHOULD NOTE THAT CONSULAR SECTION PRESENTLY HAS TWO FSL POSITIONS. ONE POSPOION IS CONSULAR ASSISTANT AND OTHER IS TELEPHONE OPERATOR:RECEPTIONIST POSITION THAT HAS IN PRACTICE BECOME SECOND CONSULAR ASSISTANT. THIS MEANS THAT ALL MEMBERS OF CONSULAR SECTION (INCLUDING FSO CONSULAR OFFICER) HAVE HAD, UNTIL SECTION RECENTLY STAFFED WITH FOUR FSL'S, TO OPERATE POST'S TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD AND RECEIVE ALL WALK-IN VISITORS. SITUATIONS WITH TWO FSL EMPLOYEES HAS BECOME UNMANAGABLE -- PARTICULARLY WHEN CONSULAR OFFICER (USUALLY WITH CONSUL ASSISTANT SERVING AS INTERPRETER) WAS IN HIS OFFICE INTERVIEWING IV APPLICANT -- A TIME CONSUMING TASK. REMAINING FSL WAS LEFT TASK OF TYPING PASSPORTS OR ISSUING VISAS (BOTH TASKS REQUIRING CONCENTRATION TO AVOID ERRORS) WHILE HANDLING SWITCHBOARD AND RECEIVING VISITORS.

4. DAILY FLOW OF CONGEN VISITORS INCREASING OUT OF PROPORTION TO INCREASE IN CONSULAR WORKLOAD. PREVIOUSLY FSL SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR AND RECEPTIONIST PROVIDED SOME ASSISTANCE IN HANDLING CONSULAR WORKLOAD BY HANDLING MOST ROUTINE OF CONSULAR TASKS. THIS IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE AS RECEPTIONIST MUST NOW DEVOTE FULL TIME TO HANDLING TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD AND RECEIVING WALK-IN VISITORS. POST'S GREATLY ENLARGED TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM MEANS THAT CONGEN IS LOOKED UPON MUCH MORE THAN BEFORE AS FOCAL POINT FOR COMMERCIAL INFORMATION. HENCE DEMANDS PLACED ON RECEPTIONIST FOR INFORMATION OF COMMERCIAL CONTENT IS GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE (POST HAS ONLY ONE FSL COMMERCIAL ASSISTANT WHO, BUT NATURE OF HIS POSITION, IS REQUIRED TO BE AWAY FROM HIS OFFICE DURING PART OF HIS WORK DAY). FURTHERMORE, INCUMBANT IN RECEPTIONIST POSITION DEVOTES MORE TIME TO TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD AS SAG TELEPHONE SYSTEM BECOMES MORE OVERBURDENED AND OPERATOR IS OF INESTIMABLE VALUE IN FIGHTING BATTLE OF PLACING LOCAL AND LONG DISTANCE

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CALLS. CONSEQUENTLY, WHILE A YEAR AGO, POST COULD SAY THAT IT COULD USE RECEPTIONIST POSITION PART TIME FOR CONSULAR WORK, THIS IS NO LONGER CORRECT. THUS, WITHOUT THIRD POSITION IN CONSULAR SECTION, THAT SECTION WOULD HAVE LESS MANHOURS TO DEVOTE TO CONSULAR WORK NOW THAN IT DID A YEAR AGO AND WITH A SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER WORKLOAD.

5. IN ORDER POST MAY MAINTAIN ITS NORMAL LEVEL OF OPERATIONS

(NOTE THAT CONSULAR SECTION IS CURRENTLY BORROWING EMPLOYEE FROM ADMIN SECTION) THROUGHOUT CONSULATE GENERAL, APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHING THIRD CONSULAR FSL POSITION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. IMPORTANT THAT POSITION BE ESTABLISHED AT FSL-6 GRADE LEVEL AS INCUMBENT IN POSITION MUST BE FLUENT IN BOTH ARABIC AND ENGLISH. CANDIDATES FOR NEW POSITION WHO HAVE THOSE LANGUAGE SKILLS ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO RECRUIT LOCALLY AS FOREIGN COMPANIES WILLING TO PAY ALMOST ANY PRICE TO GAIN EMPLOYEE WITH THAT QUALIFICATION. LAST TWO FSL'S RECRUITED AT FSL-7 AND 8 LEVEL TO FILL SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR/RECEPTIONIST POSITION, LEFT TO ACCEPT POSITIONS ELSEWHERE AT MUCH HIGHER SALARY LEVELS.
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